

Testimony on HB 5450, AAC the Palliative Use of Marijuana
March 3, 2016

By Christina Eva Capitan

Chairperson Gerratana, Chairperson Ritter, Ranking Member Markley, Ranking Member Srinivasan, and other distinguished members of the Public Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide to you my testimony on HB 5450, AAC the Palliative Use of Marijuana.

I am strongly in support of this bill, in part because of its focus to extend the legal use of medicinal marijuana to children under the age of 18, Children who are suffering with debilitating medical conditions. Many times these conditions are uncontrolled or have been grossly exacerbated by other more invasive and dangerous methods of treatment that are currently available to them. These treatments include multiple series of surgeries and pharmaceuticals followed by pharmaceuticals. These options hold little to no promise of success, and worse bare precautions of the possibility of brain and other vital organ damage or even death.

In Connecticut to date, the pharmaceutically modeled Medical Marijuana Program that was signed into law in May of 2012, with the passing of PA 12-55, has been noted by many, as extremely successful thus far. The program is growing exponentially; it is praised continually for its progress and is an imperative point of reference for reliable research of marijuana in western medicines future.

Although the argument remains that not enough studies have been done, in reality, the human trials have been created and are ongoing through the current Connecticut Medical Marijuana Program. Connecticut's Medical Marijuana Program is one that seems to be highly supported, and even revered throughout the medical community. It is projected to be an invaluable asset to medical professionals, those who are suffering from severe qualifying conditions. (As long as those persons are of legal adult age) and anticipating the passing of this bill, the brave kids (and parents) who fight for their lives daily.

Patients that are living with or dying from these qualifying diseases or conditions, both within and outside of Connecticut's borders, both adults and children have been in the past, and would now otherwise be, suffering undoubtedly without safe access to medical marijuana. The symptoms and side effects of the diseases and conditions themselves or from the treatments of said diseases and conditions, that were once unavoidable and detrimental to one's quality of life and natural pursuit of happiness have been markedly eased by the use of the medicinal marijuana in its many forms.

These are the same illness' diseases and side effects have perpetuated the opiate crisis and ultimately the heroin epidemic within our state. This epidemic will ultimately infect our youth, in more than one way.

It is a shame that we are still lacking in the pediatric spectrum of medical marijuana here in Connecticut. A spectrum is in such great need of immediate attention and action. Connecticut's children deserve the same opportunity as its adults have been given to heal more naturally and to live a happy, productive, prosperous life.

I have worked closely with several parents who would like to have a chance to try the extracted oil of the marijuana plant, stating that they have heard so many success stories of from people in states that have pediatric programs already in place. Explaining how they have tried every conventional legal avenue, but that they have run out of options and are inevitably running out of hope. They desperately seek, as many parents would the ability to acquire this oil.

These parents would do anything to help their children, including leaving everything behind in Connecticut to become medical refugees in states where the oil of the marijuana plant is available. Some consider leaving their careers their homes and even others members of their families to seek what they feel is their last hope to get their child back. The incomprehensible drive behind a parent seeking the resources for their children, how and where they can legally safely and affordably obtain medical marijuana oils is inspiring, but when you consider that they are driven by fear and desperation it becomes clear that it's more of a natural instinct than a deliberate act of love.

If I could please ask you, at this time, just for a moment to put yourselves in the shoes of a parent whose child is sick, combative, regressing convulsing and in danger of dying, at any moment. Imagine that you and your child are out of accepted legal viable options within your state. A child whom you would give your life for, has been either unresponsive or adversely affected by all of the surgical and pharmaceutical options you have been given. The desperation the hopelessness and fear that is capturing your every breath, is literally indescribable. Would you just give up on your child?

Now if you will, imagine the spark of hope that is lit within you, as a parent of this sick or dying child who is your everything, at the thought of just one more possible option. A speck of light at the end of a dark tunnel. Would you give anything you had (including your last breath) to give your child another chance at life? How far would you go to gain safe legal access to an alternative medicine? When an option that provides this kind of hope has been available but just out of reach for your child, would you not do whatever you could to access it?

There are many great advantages to giving parents the ability to access and use, in the treatment of their child's condition, safe regulated and properly prepared marijuana products as deemed appropriate by both the treating physicians and the families of said children.

By passing HB 5450, you will be responsible for nearly decimating the opportunity for parents and children to be exploited by propaganda and illegal commerce. You will be showing the nation that Connecticut is a forward thinking and compassionate state, as well as setting a precedent with our exceptional regulations procedures and models that will be looked at for reference throughout the country for years to come.

By passing HB 5450 you can be assured that parents will be properly educated in administering marijuana as medicine to their children and that an efficient and clear support system will be able to be established.

I have great confidence in our state licensed producers and dispensaries, to be able to safely and effectively provide this medicine to patients of any age appropriately and conservatively.

This bill has the potential to save so many lives and provide safer alternatives to parents who have tried other options to no avail. It also is likely to open countless doors for research opportunities regarding medical marijuana within Connecticut.

Please consider passing HB 5450, for the reasons that have been stated within this testimony.

Thank you for your time and attention in this matter.

Respectfully,

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Lifelong Connecticut Resident & MMP Patient